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**November 15, 2004**  
**Marine Fisheries Advisory**

**MASSACHUSETTS MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**APPROVES NEW REGULATIONS**

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At a November 4, 2004 business meeting, the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) approved Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) proposals for new rules affecting: 1) raised footrope trawl use requirements, 2) recreational black sea bass closures, 3) gear restrictions in Cape Cod Bay Critical Habitat, 4) commercial and recreational groundfish regulations, and 5) hook gear and commercial striped bass fishery control date. These issues were discussed at public hearings on October 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>.

**1) Use of a raised footrope trawl** will be required to fish during September in the Cape Ann Whiting Area (322 CMR 3.04 & 8.07). This action expands the current requirement for the use of the trawl in the Upper Cape Cod Whiting Area to the Whiting Area off Rockport and complements federal regulations in adjacent waters.

**2) Recreational black sea bass fishery** will be closed from December 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> to comply with mandates of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (322 CMR 6.28).

**3) Restrictions on use of fixed gear in the Cape Cod Bay Critical Habitat** will be extended from April 30<sup>th</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup> consistent with federal regulations (322 CMR 12.05).

**4) State regulations governing the take and landing of groundfish species** in the Commonwealth will complement federal regulations enacted under Amendment 13 (322 CMR 6.03):

- Recreational cod minimum size of 22”;
- Recreational haddock minimum size of 19”;
- Commercial cod possession limits of 800-lbs. north of Cape Cod and 1,000-lbs. south and east of Cape Cod;
- Seasonal commercial yellowtail flounder possession limits of 250-lbs. during April – May & October – November and 750-lbs. during June – September and December – March;
- Commercial and recreational halibut minimum size of 36”;
- Commercial halibut possession limit of one halibut per trip; and
- Recreational halibut possession limit of one halibut per angler.

**5) November 4, 2004 control date for fisheries conducted with hooks and other hand gear, including the commercial striped bass fishery** (322 CMR 6.07 & 7.04). The control date may be used for establishing eligibility criteria for determining levels of future access to fisheries conducted using hooks including longlines, rod and reel, or hand gear. Future entry may be based on historic harvest levels of a vessel or other criteria related to overall harvest capacity. This is

purely a notice of a control date and does not constitute the implementation of any new restriction(s) in these fisheries.

**No actions were taken on the remaining items presented at October hearings as *Marine Fisheries* and the MFAC determined they required further information and/or discussion: 1) sea scallop minimum ring size, 2) clarification of permitted commercial striped bass fishing aboard for-hire vessels, 3) commercial and recreational lobster minimum sizes and escape vent sizes, and 4) commercial sea herring no-fishing days.** *Marine Fisheries* staff will continue to work with the public, MFAC, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, New England Fishery Management Council, and NOAA Fisheries to develop appropriate comprehensive regulations for the striped bass, lobster, and herring fisheries.

For further information please visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).